

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 1, 2000 (BOS Mtg. 6/06/00)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel M. Stuck, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Amending Chapter 19 of the York County Code

The enclosed Ordinance proposes several changes to Chapter 19 of the York County Code. The first modification is to increase the monthly garbage collection fees for extra services available in York County's garbage collection program, such as backdoor and long lane service. This change is necessary to cover the price increases listed in the new collection contract that commenced in March 2000, per Resolution Number R99-212. Fees for these extra services have not been increased since the inception of the County's collection program in 1993. An increase in the backdoor and long lane prices will affect approximately fifty citizens. This increase does not affect the basic collection rates or those services provided for citizens who are unable to get their materials to the front road-side due to age or handicap.

The enclosed Ordinance also proposes to increase the tipping fee at the York County Transfer Station. York County contracted out the operation and maintenance of the transfer station, as well as the hauling and disposal of waste from the station, in an Agreement with BFI Waste Systems of North America, Inc., effective September 1, 1999. This Agreement was authorized by the York County Board of Supervisors on September 29, 1999, as Resolution No. R99-145.

According to Section V, paragraph D. of this Agreement, specific fixed rates and per ton fees relating to the operation, hauling and disposal "shall be adjusted annually at the beginning of the second and each subsequent Contract Period during the term of this Agreement in an amount equal to any increase or decrease in the Cost Index for the twelve (12) month period prior to the date of the adjustment." The Cost Index utilized for this Agreement is the U.S. Department of Labor's consumer price index for Transportation. For several years, this particular price index has not changed significantly. As a result, the County's costs have increased less than 3% annually. This year's high fuel costs however have caused this price index to increase by 9.4%. According to Section V of the Agreement, "No annual increase under this provision shall exceed six percent (6%)."

York County must raise its tipping fee accordingly in order to cover expenses.

Finally, this Ordinance change addresses some difficulties the County has experienced in collecting fees for garbage collection service. The County has lost revenue over the term of its garbage collection program due to renters who move out without paying for the service they utilized. The County has also lost revenue from residents who allow their bill

to become several months delinquent and then claim that they should not have to pay it because they had moved or had not used the service.

Currently, there is over six thousand dollars worth of bad debt on the books that has resulted from these customers. This figure does not take into account the amount of revenue that has had to be written off in the past to clear accounts for new customers. These situations are not only costly, but they also require a lot of staff time to resolve.

Regarding the issue of renters, staff proposes that the owners be responsible for garbage billings. This method is already in place for those houses currently on the sewer system. Owners could pass this charge on to their renters through the monthly rent payment. The County would then have the ability to collect fees due from a more reliable source.

Since the garbage collection program is voluntary, it is the responsibility of citizens to sign up for or discontinue their garbage service. Most citizens handle this matter quite well. There are others, however, who do not take care of this matter in a timely manner. Often these customers wait six months or more to let staff know that they have moved, regardless of the repeated billings and late notices that they receive. Despite the lengthy time lapse, they expect the charges to be deleted from their account. Staff feels that an amendment to the County Code to hold the resident responsible for garbage collection charges until he discontinues his service would eliminate this problem.

These changes, if approved by the Board, would be effective July 1, 2000.

I recommend the Board adopt Ordinance 00-6.

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